

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4634

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USUN NEW YORK 2328

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 3915

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG IS

SUBJECT: BOE POLICY STATEMENT

REF: CAIRO 3868

1. THE GOE POLICY STATEMENT PRESENTED TO THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY ON DECEMBER 8 BY DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER HATEM CONTAINED NEITHER SURPRISES NOR HINTS THAT SURPRISES ARE IN THE OFFING. POST-OCTOBER FOREIGN POLICY WAS SET FORTH IN BROAD OUTLINE, PROBABLY BECAUSE EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATING POSITIONS FOR GENEVA ARE STILL IN THE PROCESS OF FORMATION. A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE ADDRESS WAS DEVOTED TO RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE HOME FRONT, REFLECTING GOE CONCERN ABOUT SERIOUS PRICE INFLATION AND SCARCITY OF SOME CONSUMER GOODS.

2. SOF CHIEF INTEREST WERE THE "PRINCIPLES" OF GOE PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA CONFERENCE (REFTEL). OTHER POINTS STRESSED BY DR. HATEM WERE AS FOLLOWS:

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(A) EGYPT WILL CONTINUE COOPERATION WITH THE UN AND IS ANXIOUS THAT THE DETENTE BETWEEN THE TWO SUPERPOWERS REMAIN A MEANS

FOR SERVING PEACE AND JUSTICE.

(B) EGYPT'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE CEASEFIRE WAS AN EXPRESSION OF HER WISH FOR PEACE; IT DOES NOT MEAN AN END TO THE BATTLE NOR DOES IT ALONE LEAD TO PEACE.

(C) THE ARAB NATION THREATENS THE PEACE OF NO ONE. ISRAEL'S PROCRASTINATION IS THE REAL THREAT TO PEACE.

(D) SOVIET POLITICAL ASSISTANCE WILL REMAIN ONE OF THE FOUNDATIONS BINDING EGYPTIAN AND SOVIET PEOPLES.

(E) EGYPT SALUTES HER VALIANT ARMY AND THE UNITY OF ARAB LEADERS. HATEM SINGLED OUT ONLY THE SYRIAN ARMY FOR SPECIAL PRAISE.

(F) WITHOUT MENTIONING THE ROLE OF OIL, HATEM SAW "SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE" IN THE POSITION OF SOME EUROPEAN STATES, TRADITIONALLY PRO-ISRAEL, WHICH ARE BEGINNING TO QUESTION ISRAEL'S DANGEROUS ADVENTURIST POLICY.

(G) SUMED WILL BE BUILT "ACCORDING TO THE BEST WORLD OFFERS AND THE LOWEST COST." (COMMENT: THIS RATHER BLAND LANGUAGE INDICATES EXISTENCE SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN FINAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR FINANCING AND CONSTRUCTION OF SUMED. SEE SEPTTEL.)

(H) GOE WILL MAKE AVAILABLE TEA AND SUGAR AT FREE MARKET PRICES AND IMPROVE THE RATIONING SYSTEM.

3. COMMENT: IN GENERAL, GOE STATEMENT WAS LOW KEY, GIVING AS MUCH EMPHASIS TO DOMESTIC MATTERS AS TO EGYPT'S DIPLOMATIC INTENTIONS. THE STRESS ON THE UN AS A PARTY TO THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS WAS REFLECTED IN GOE SPOKESMAN ANIS' STATEMENT DECEMBER 10 (CAIRO 3894) AND IN DECEMBER 10 AHRAH ARTICLE ON THE SAME THEME (CAIRO 3873). IT IS OF INTEREST TOO THAT STATEMENT'S PRAISE OF SOVIETS WAS LIMITED TO ONE SOMEWHAT LUKEWARM SENTENCE.
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